The 25th Anniversary Literary Arts Festival is presented by the Grossmont College English Dept. and Creative Writing Program. Most of this year’s events are made possible by the amazing generosity of WACC, the World Arts & Cultures Committee of Grossmont College.

APRIL 26

2 PM • POETRY SLAM
hosted by GILL SOTU
playwright, musician, poet, and Slam Champion
7 PM • JIM RULAND
novelist, rock biographer, and host of the Vermin on the Mount reading series

APRIL 27

11 AM • MATT THOMPSON
playwright, actor, director, founder
Hillcrest’s Compass Theatre
2 PM • LILY HOANG
poet, essayist, fairytale writer
7 PM • NEW VOICES
student reading

APRIL 28

2 PM • WHY LIT MATTERS
student panel
7 PM • MARCELO HERNANDEZ CASTILLO
poet and author
LAF Creative Writing Contest Winners

APRIL 29

12:30 PM • JULIA DIXON EVANS
novelist and fiction writer
7 PM • CARL PHILLIPS
internationally celebrated poet

INFO: JimRuland.net

2 - 3:15 PM GILL SOTU hosts POETRY SLAM

The 25th Anniversary LAF kicks off with the 6th Annual Student SLAM competition. Open to all Grossmont College students, poets battle for the bragging rights of being crowned the Grand Slam Champion of Grossmont College. Limited to 12 participants, the top six are selected to advance to Round Two, from which a champion is named.

Gill Sotu wears the hats of teacher, social advocate, recording artist, slam poet, and playwright. Twice Grand Slam Poetry Champion, currently Sotu serves as teaching artist for the Old Globe Theatre, Program Director for Intrepid Theatre, and Creative Director for Texit San Diego. He has also been named 2020 Artist in Residence for the Gainesville Creative Forces Art Summit.

Sotu has featured on NBC 7’s Art Pulse TV, written and performed poetic segments for Melissa Adao’s dance theater showcase, Hip-Hop CabHooray! (awarded Outstanding Production at the 2015 Fringe Fest), performed with the San Diego Symphony, and hosted TEDx San Diego in 2017. His spoken word opera, Ordinary Magic, was produced at the Joan Kroc Theatre in 2016.

His publications include How to Love God and Acrobats, Neo Nostalgia, Flawed American Male, and others. INFO: gillsotu.com

7 - 8:15 PM novelist, rock biographer JIM RULAND

Novelist, rock memoirist, punk rock blogger, and host of the Vermin on the Mount reading series, Jim Ruland returns to the LAF to read from his newly released work, Do What You Want (Hachette Books 2020), the first official autobiography of the ground-breaking LA punk group, Bad Religion, which Ruland composed in a hybrid oral history/narrative using the voices of the band members. The book also includes rare, never-before-seen archival materials.

Ruland’s other books include his short story collection, Big Lonesome (Gorsky Press 2017), and his debut novel, Forest of Fortune (Gallery Books 2014), a noir-ish ironic comedy set in the world of tribal gaming and named by Los Angeles Magazine as one of its "Six Must-Read Books to Finish Out the Summer."

Ruland regularly blogs about punk rock and is a book reviewer for San Diego CityBeat, Los Angeles Times, and the Los Angeles Review of Books. His memoir and fiction have appeared in Esquire, Granta, Hobart, and others. Ruland is also a NEA award recipient, and member of Barrio Logan’s Golondrina arts collective.

INFO: jimruland.net

FLEX CREDIT:
The LAF offers FLEX credit for extracurricular attendance. Complete a Project Proposal for one or more events and submit it with your Professional Development contract.

FESTIVAL AND PROGRAM CO-COORDINATORS:
Adam Deutsch, Karl Sherlock, and Daniela Sow. Info about our Creative Writing Program’s workshops and degree certificate are on our English Department website: grossmont.edu/cwp

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11 AM - 12:15 PM MATT THOMPSON
PLAYWRIGHT
Stage actor, director, playwright, and lecturer, MATTHEW SALAZAR-THOMPSON has authored dozens of plays during his career. His commissions include The San Diego Repertory Theatre, North Coast Repertory Theatre, Point Loma Playhouse, Coronado Playhouse, and many others. The 146 Point Flame, based on the historic 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, has been name-checked in Southern Theatre Magazine as one of the top ten plays on immigration. Who’s Afraid of Me, Myself and Edward Albee?, was developed under the Albee’s mentorship and accepted into the New York Fringe Festival. His play Switching Tracks placed in the top five finalists in the Detroit New Works Festival in 2017, the Garry Marshall Theatre New Works Festival 2018, and North Coast Repertory Theatre’s Playwriting Showcase. A former Artistic Director of Point Loma Playhouse, Thompson lectures in the SJSU’s Theatre & Film Dept. INFO: matthewathomthesis.weebly.com

2 - 3:15 PM LILY HOANG
POET, ESSAYIST, FAIRYTALE AUTHOR
LILY HOANG is the author of five books of prose, including A Bestiary, 2016 winner of the Cleveland State University Poetry Center’s Non-Fiction Book Prize. Hoang’s first book, Parabola (2008), won the Chiasmus Press Un-Doing the Novel Contest. Her other novels include Changing (Fairy Tale Review Press 2008), which received a PEN Open Books Award, and The Evolutionary Revolution (Les Fugues Press 2010), Old Cat Lady (1913 Books 2016), and The Book of Martha (Insigne Blanc Press 2017). Hoang is Editor of Jaded Ibis Press and Executive Editor of HTML Giant. She has also served as Prose Editor at Puerto del Sol and Non-Fiction Editor at Drunken Boat. Additionally she is co-editor of the anthology The Force of What’s Possible: Writers on Accessibility and the Avant-Garde. In 2017, she was Mellon Scholar in Residence at Rhodes University in South Africa. Currently, Lily Hoang is a Visiting Assistant Professor of English and Women’s Studies at Saint Mary’s College in Indiana. INFO: literature.ucsd.edu/people/faculty/hoang

2 - 3:15 PM WHY LIT MATTERS
STUDENT PANEL
Hosted by Professors LISA LEDRI-AGUILAR and SARAH MARTIN, this annual, student-favorite event features a panel of Grossmont College students sharing moving and powerful personal accounts of the role literature has played in their journeys, advocating the relevance of literature and its potential to inspire change, cultivate humanity, and serve us in, both, personal and global ways. Past WLM panelists have included PUENTE students, history professor Dr. Sue Gong, author María Rybakova, Dean Abigail Barragan, Dr. Oralee Holder, Dr. Pete Schmidt, students Raphael Umphres-Piscitelli, Adrienne Delgado, and Creative Writing Program alumnus Cassady Lynch and Felicia Williams.

7 - 8:15 PM CARL PHILLIPS
POET, ESSAYIST

The finale of our 25th Anniversary LAF welcomes Queer African American author, poet luminary, and former Chancellor of the Academy of American Poets, CARL PHILLIPS, with a reading of poems from his latest collection, Pale Colors in a Tall Field (Farrar, Straus and Giroux 2020). Widely esteemed as one of the most influential lyric poets in the United States, Phillips has authored fifteen internationally acclaimed books of poetry, including Silverchest (2013) and Wild Is the Wind (2018), both winners of the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for Poetry. His numerous accolades include the Kingsley Tufts Poetry Award, the Theodore Roethke Memorial Foundation Poetry Award, the Thom Gunn Award for Gay Male Poetry, and award in literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Library of Congress, and the Academy of American Poets. Phillips is also an important affiliate of the Dark Room Collective, an intergenerational reading series formed after the funeral of James Baldwin in 1987, to cultivate the work of black poets of various aesthetic movements.

A four-time finalist for the National Book Award, and finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award, Carl Phillips honors include the Lambda Literary Award, an award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and the Theodore Roethke Memorial Foundation Poetry Award, the Thom Gunn Award for Gay Male Poetry, and fellowships from the Guggenheim Foundation, the Library of Congress, and the Academy of American Poets, for which he served as Chancellor from 2006-2012. He is Prof. of English and Creative Writing at Washington University in St. Louis. INFO: poetryfoundation.org/poets/carl-phillips